

Letter No. 63

Monday, July 28.

Major. J. H. Massey.

6 Palestine Coy. The Riffs.

Middle East forces.

My darling sweet Barbara

Your letter - not numbered - posted on May 19th, arrived about two hours ago. It was a lovely letter my darling, & said some sweet things to me, & I am still flushed with pleasure because of them. You told me how much you were enjoying my letters, how they helped you & made you feel so much happier & more contented. You have no idea how much pleasure it gives me to hear you say that, because that was so very much my one idea when I was writing all those letters. I felt that you would be feeling pretty low & miserable, & would need all you could have to keep up your spirits. And it nearly drove me frantic when I kept on hearing from you that none of my letters were arriving. Thank goodness they started on time.

And you said how much you missed my love & kindness & looking after you. I don't know whether you calculated that remark - but there are few things you could have said to make me happier. I think you knew already, that almost as much as loving you, & you loving me, I love to be appreciated by you & anything I may do for you. I think I'm a little bit like a dog in that way, don't you, darling?

I know if you have missed having me to do things for you, I have been very sad because I have not been able to be there to do them for you. Next time, sweetest heart, when you have

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our baby daughter, I will make ~~make~~ up for this
gloomy Prague, so unhappy inopportune parting.
I will be so marvellously loving & kind & thoughtful
otherwise that you will, perhaps, think it worth
while that I was away this time. if only because
it has made me such a perfect husband of a
pregnant wife.

I feel, my darling, that out of all this uncertainty, all
this welter of confusion, lack of knowledge of what is
going to happen - there is just one thing which is
absolutely certain & about which there is no doubt or
argument - & to which we can ~~must~~ cling & which
helps us to look forward - that is the certainty
that when we come together again, there is
wonderful & assured happiness for us. no matter
what the conditions may be. I'm quite certain
that I shall love you more & more with a
better love, that passion will be more wonderful
than ever it has been before - that we shall be
more to each other in every way & our life
will be more interesting & happy in every
way. I feel it is going to be so wonderful, that
I cannot put it into words. But I also feel
that you feel the same, understand what
I mean. And I am quite certain that neither
of us will be disappointed. If it is very lonely
to look forward to my sweetheart - I have
a quiet & very steady faith in this.

Your letter also told me about Amy's arrival &

how she picked her own balloon within two days & bravely
flew off beyond endurance. She really is the silliest
but courageous - though it is difficult not to feel fond
of her, having known her for so long now, & shared to
some extent in her ups & downs with Vernon & Whiskers
etc. on; but, I agree, it is easier to do this from
a distance, than to have to listen to her fatuous outpourings.

I wrote you some fairly nice things about her in a
previous letter - one had an uneasy feeling that
by a coincidence the letter might arrive at the
same time as May, you might be too weak to
read it yourself & she would read it to you &
see this. But it really would not matter. She
would probably miss the point any way, her brain
would not remember long enough. I think it is
a "happy release" for old Kitty - perhaps some of
her friends will have had the sense to tell her
so. As far as being next door, or even in the
same village, & Geoffrey being up board - by christ
if they are permitted to see us once a month, they
may think themselves bloody lucky. I'm afraid I shall
not be any less intolerant when I return probably
more so. And I still think it is the best policy,
because more often than not, any bad impression of
people is confirmed when I get to know them better,
& it is so pleasant, from time to time, to realize
that one has been wrong. Ben-Aziz, the wise
little man, has pointed out to me a new system which
I seem to have fallen into, for showing my

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dislike of somebody. Apparently when whoever it is, says something to me, I screw up my face & lean forward & say "what was that", having heard perfectly well the first time. Or did he do this before? And so Ray has written to me twice! Nothing has arrived yet, so I do not think it will make very much difference to me whether it does or not. Do you remember that first letter she wrote to me, introducing herself after meeting Vernon in Switzerland? What a masterpiece that was - 8 pages of writing. Any normal person would have stopped it down on one or else telephoned. I can just imagine Vernon working it out, & saying you get in touch with Barbara & Harry & Masy - & then when came home, I will come over & stay with them.

It must be pretty humiliating. I wish to have all this ⁱⁿ you are my best friend stuff pushed down their throat. I sincerely hope you have not taken her to Devan - I don't think you can have, or it would have been in one of your p.s. If Geoffrey Dawson has half the brain he thinks he has, or Gordon credits him with having - they will go the same way as Nora. And I wonder how soon Vernon will suggest another trip into adultery? and seems to be getting rather unkind & moral about poor old Vernon but that episode of his life has been rather foolish, sordid, boring, generally not to his credit.

Tuesday - July 29th. At this point last night I stopped to write to you an Aigraph - also one to my ma for her birthday. I had two pes. from you this morning - July 6th & 11th - really marvellous to have them, they are so comparatively up to date. You say nothing at all about yourself, but you sound very well & very happy & you tell me that Max is lovely, beautiful very well. But I am dying, dying & longing & longing & pining to know what he looks like, & if he is showing any signs of character, intelligence or personality. I'm sure he will, being your child - his looks seem to be alright & I am just waiting for the details.

Your p.c. also mentioned about having had to pay 30/- on the underclothes & dressing gown, which seems excessive & I suppose I had better not send any more things like that. But I have not had your letter about them yet, & hope very much that we shall be rewarded by you really liking the things. I still have 3 pairs of stockings to send you, I wonder now whether to send them or not. I will ask you in our Aigraph & you will reply by p.c. I rather imagine stockings will be useful, especially when winter comes again. Wednesday July 30th. Yesterday was no good at all for working, because we had a concert from the Jewish Welfare Committee, last night. It was not a particularly good one, but quite enjoyable. There was a girl who played the violin quite pleasantly - a fat, black Peters who screamed songs, & a pretty girl who gave recitations with considerable pep & personality, but they were all quite

Hebrew, & so I just was not there. I made my usual speech at the end, but it was all rather silly & awkward, because instead of the party lining up to take a bow, they just disappeared & did not come back except had to say "thankyou very much" & we've all enjoyed it awfully" to nobody. Then they all came up to the mess afterwards, which is the part that annoys me because Rutherford, the Secretary man, always seems to have about four changes and who seem to have come to the mess always seem to be the ones who have the most to drink. However, the men enjoyed the concert very much, which is the main thing.

I have to give a performance on Friday - lecturing again - this time to the Royal Navy! I was let in for this by my friend Commander (Uncle) Warburton, & think I have told you of him. Two very special & modern destroyers have just come in. Their Captains are very anxious to have their landing parties lectured on "fighting". So Uncle rang me up & asked me would I do it. He went along to see one of the Captains on his ship at 12:30 today & had some lovely Plymouth Gins, & found out what they wanted. I was shown all over the ship. I really do feel a bit boged out these occasions, never having been within miles of anything so dangerous as fighting. And these people were in the re-capture of Rhodes, the evacuations of Greece & Crete, probably many other affairs. But provided they can take it, most does them no harm good - it is certainly good for me.

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There has been quite a change in my officer position during the last few weeks, & you say you like hearing about the people I am with so I will tell you all about it. On August 6th this Coy will have been established for 6 months - I shall have been away from you for 10 - & on or about that date they begin changing British officers for Jewish, leaving only me, the second ifc & one British sub. By now, the new Jewish ones have arrived & the British ones have not departed & so I am to strong. A chap called Flaks arrived last week - he is 31, has a wife & a child, & was a farmer before joining. I don't really know much about him yet, having been too busy to find out - but he seems a quiet, decent sort of bloke, & intelligent & hard working. But I don't think very much of his personality - but he is shy, & may come out. The other one has been a N.C.O. in our Coy & was commissioned today. I took him over as a lance Corporal, promoted him Corporal & Sgt, & recommended him for his commission. He is 24, & a South African Jew - his family were Polish, he was born in the Belgian Congo & he is now naturalised British. His name is Gerald Kalk, he is a very pleasant, steady & reliable young man. All chaps who have earned commissions from the ranks in the other Cops, have been posted to another Coy on becoming an Officer, but I decided I wanted prefer to keep someone I had trained myself

rather than take a chance on somebody else's next judgement. I think he will do very well.

I also have a R.A. officer, attached to me for the purpose of a Court Martial, his Regt having broken up - a most frightful chit - ten years in the ranks in the Regular Army, & commissioned in 1939. And he is charged with borrowing money, under colour of from the Executive Parlor or chamber. Very nice? Not, content with this, he has, during the last week, borrowed £110 from Solomon, £550/- from a R.A.F. assistant Adjutant. And then, before I knew of this, having got weekend leave from me, overspent his leave, 5 days at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem, about £3 a day.

I was very rude to him yesterday morning, & confined him to barracks until his trial comes off. Blasted nuisance - it means all the more work for me, and has to do the summary of evidence & generally prepare all the briefs. I protested vigorously at the King for not attaching him to a R.A. unit, but was pounced off with another of these compliments about having so much more confidence in me. I wonder very much when H.Q. file all this extra work onto me, whether these compliments are real, or just to lighten the burden. However, H.Q. told me that the proceedings for this case brought forth a nice thank you from the Judge Advocate General's Dept at force H.Q. who said that it was the best prepared, therefore the clever care with which

they had had to deal for a very long time. So now
I have two officer trials coming up - the bloody man
& my wretched Thornton. Thank goodness, a man's C.O.
cannot also be on the Court.

You said in your last letter darling, that you hoped all
this C.O. business would not make me forget how to
make faces & make you laugh. There is really no need
to worry my sweetheart. I shall always want to make you
laugh & feel pleased when I do - & pull faces too. I do
now enter my mission in my room. I think the
responsibility has made me a bit more impatient &
even intolerant of other people - but then my
responsibility at Norths was at least as great as this,
though my powers were not so absolute as they
are now - what with Executive Directors & Trades'
Unions. I always feel I do hope I am right, that I
have changed quite a lot - for the better - that will
have cut out a certain amount of nonsense, & that I am
more sensible of what is worth while. And certainly that
my love for you & appreciation of you is deeper & even
more sincere, & I hope, a great deal more understanding.
I always hope that perhaps my letters may show this.
But, harping back to this C.O. stuff again, it certainly
seems a far cry from the days of Territorial
camp with Vernon & everybody. Drunk every night,
without fail, beating up the mess, & tremendous rockets
from Mandelberg or Zog the next day.

I went to a shop yesterday & bought for you a

bracelet & a ring - ¹⁰ both Yeminite work. The bracelet is an enormous heavy thing of solid silver & very crude & I really cannot imagine whether you will like it or not. I think you will. It cost 13/- And the ring is the same metal, quite nicely worked, & with a big black onyx. I don't know if it's genuine or not, I do not know, but you cannot scratch it with a file. And this cost 8/- And this shop also had some really beautiful silk blouses embroidered by Yeminites - they were brightly pretty, & I shall definitely buy 2 or 3 to bring back home to you. I will post off the bracelet & ring tomorrow - See Mail of course.

The war does seem to be going well for us now. I saw in the paper today, that the London Stock Exchange odds against the war ending before Christmas had dropped from 10/- to 7/- against since July, & these seem to be very low odds to me, considering all things. I beg you to consider it could be fine darling, not an so longing for you, but it seems ~~completely~~ the possible to remain away from Jersey very much longer. It really almost feels now though back on Earth realising for the first time how much I love you, & that you really love me is, ~~how~~ how beautiful & wonderfully perfect for me. And I cannot wait to get home & begin this new & wonderful life. I'm quite convinced & sure that my hopes are built on solid ground - & will last forever. And I do want to see our little Marie before he gets too big. All my deepest, dearest, most passionate & everlasting love - my darling sweet Anna



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Mrs. H. Massey.

Carseland-

Pillary Hill.

Noss Mayo-

No. Plymouth.

